

**LOG OF MEETING
DIRECTORATE FOR ENGINEERING SCIENCES**

SUBJECT: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code Committee Meeting to Consider New Proposals; NFPA 73, Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings

DATE OF MEETING: February 25-26, 1999

PLACE OF MEETING: DoubleTree Resort and Conference Center
Kissimmee, FL

LOG ENTRY SOURCE: Doug Lee, ESEE *DL*

COMMISSION ATTENDEES: Doug Lee, ESEE

NON-COMMISSION ATTENDEES:

Lee F. Richardson, National Fire Protection Association
Donald Nissen, NFPA 73 Committee Chair, Underwriters
Laboratories, Inc.
L.L. Buie, Pettit & Pettit Consulting Engineers, Inc.
Edward S. Charkey
Rolland Leon Dover, International Association of Electrical
Inspectors
Stephen L. Dyrnes, Institute of Electrical & Electronics
Engineers
David P. Brown, Edison Electric Institute
Jack Wells, National Electrical Manufacturers Association
Dan D. White, New York Board of Fire Underwriters
J. Philip Simmons, International Association of Electrical
Inspectors
Alan Manche, National Electrical Manufacturers Association

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

The committee met to discuss and act upon 30 proposals submitted for the 2000 revision of the Residential Electrical Maintenance Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings, NFPA 73. Fifteen of the proposals were from the technical committee and fifteen were from the public. Six of the fifteen proposals from the public were from the CPSC technical staff.

The meeting was opened with a brief history of the committee and the code, primarily for the benefit of new committee members. A discussion was held on the actual usage and adoption of the code. Some members thought that portions of the code might be used but not adopted while others believed there was little use of the code. Presently, only one or two states have adopted the code or parts of it. The primary explanation for resistance to adoption was limited resources. Local governments are tasked to perform electrical inspections with fewer resources and with fewer trained electrical inspectors.

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A proposal was made by the committee to change the title and scope of the code. The change would extend the scope of the document to include multi-family dwellings and change the title to "Electrical Inspection Code for Existing Dwellings". The word "Maintenance" was changed to "Inspection" to more accurately reflect the purpose and scope of NFPA 73. Since the document is intended as an inspection code for evaluating installed electrical systems, any proposal that required installation or remedial actions was rejected.

The committee rejected the CPSC staff proposal to require arc-fault circuit-interrupters (AFCIs) on existing branch circuit conductors when a panelboard is replaced or added. Although it was stated that older homes could benefit from this technology, the committee believed that the National Electrical Code (NEC) would be the place to require installations or remedial actions.

The committee rejected the CPSC staff proposal to add a note that would permit installation of AFCIs for additional protection of branch circuits when degradation of existing conductors can not be quantified. The note was proposed to assist the electrical inspector by providing guidance of additional protection provided by AFCIs. The note would not require adding AFCIs. The committee rejected this proposal stating that any evidence of overheating and deterioration would require removal of the branch circuit conductors.

The committee rejected the CPSC staff proposal to add a note that would identify a listed load tester to determine excessive voltage drops that could be an indication of a potentially hazardous poor connection. The proposal was rejected because the committee could not define what constitutes an excessive voltage drop that would result in an unsafe condition. It was further believed that the device would need to be listed for this purpose and not just listed for safety.

The committee accepted (in principle) the CPSC staff proposal to add a listed receptacle tester to aid in the identification of improperly wired receptacles. The current code only states that the receptacle shall be properly wired and does not identify how to check for proper wiring.

The committee accepted (in principle) the CPSC staff proposal on the definition for arc-fault circuit interrupters. The definition was identical to the definition in the 1999 NEC.

The committee accepted the CPSC staff proposal to test for proper operation of an installed AFCI. The committee recognized that AFCIs will appear in homes in the near future as part of the 1999 NEC requirement for AFCIs on bedroom branch circuits by the year 2002. Accordingly, the committee believes that the AFCIs should operate properly when inspected as part of NFPA 73.

Details of the disposition of the thirty proposals will be

published subsequently by the NFPA. Ballots during the meeting are provisional and the recorded balloting will be conducted by mail. The CPSC staff is a non-voting member of the committee.